

Message Text

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41

ACTION EUR-25

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

USMISSION BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

USMISSION GENEVA

USDEL SALT TWO GENEVA UNN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD VIA POUCH

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 3740

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, UR

SUBJECT: FRENCH AMBASSADOR'S ACCOUNT OF POMPIDOU VISIT

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GENEVA FOR USDEL CSCE AND MEPC DEL
BEIRUT PASS DAMASCUS

1. SUMMARY. JUDGING FROM AMBASSADOR VIMONT'S RUNDOWN, BREZHNEV-POMPIDOU SUMMIT PRODUCED NEITHER SURPRISES NOR IMPORTANT CHANGES OF POSITION BY EITHER SIDE. CSCE, MIDDLE-EAST, AND BILATERALS WERE MAJOR CONVERSATION TOPICS. FRENCH WERE PARTICULARLY IMPRESSED BY SOVIET RIGIDITY ON CSCE. DESPITE BREZHNEV'S POSITIVE GLOSS ON THIS ASPECT OF TALKS IN HIS ALMA ATA SPEECH MARCH 15, THERE WAS APPARENTLY NO MEETING OF MINDS AT PITSUNDA EITHER ON LEVEL OF FINAL CSCE STAGE OR ON OTHER POINTS OF DISAGREEMENT. ON MIDDLE EAST, SOVIETS TOOK HARD LINE ON FINAL SETTLEMENT AND FUZZED THEIR VIEWS ON PALESTINIANS. BREZHNEV EXPRESSED SOME CONCERN ABOUT U.S. DEFENSE PROGRAMS AND SAID HE WOULD RAISE MATTER WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER. END SUMMARY.

2. FRENCH AMBASSADOR VIMONT PROVIDED BRIEFING ON POMPIDOU VISIT TO QUADRIPARTITE MEETING MARCH 15. BREZHNEV AND POMPIDOU MET FOR TOTAL OF SIX HOURS AT PLENARY MEETING MARCH 12 AND AT TETE-A-TETE MARCH 13. VIMONT PARTICIPATED IN PLENARY PLUS THREE-HOUR GROMYKO-JOBERT MEETING MARCH 13. VIMONT SAID HE WAS NOT FULLY FILLED IN ON TETE-A-TETE BUT BELIEVED IT CONCENTRATED ON BILATERALS AND CSCE.

3. VIMONT DISCRIBED BREZHNEV AS HEALTHY AND LIVELY, ADDING THAT HE LOOKED SOMEWHAT THINNER THAN WHEN AMBASSADOR HAD SEEN HIM LAST IN JULY 1973. HIS TASTE FOR LONG MONOLOGUES DID NOT DESERT HIM DURING TALKS. IN COUNTERPOINT TO HIS SHARP PUBLIC WORDS ABOUT WESTERN PRESS, BREZHNEV HAS APPARENTLY DEVELOPED A PENCHANT FOR CHATTING WITH WESTERN JOURNALISTS; HE HAVE A SHORT AIRPORT INTERVIEW TO AN ITALIAN CORRESPONDENT WHO HAD GOTTEN THROUGH THE POLICE LINE.

4. CSCE. FRENCH WERE STRUCK BY IMPORTANCE SOVIETS ATTACHED TO CONFERENCE AND BY RIGIDITY WITH WHICH THEY STUCK TO ALL THEIR FAMILIAR POSITIONS. SOVIETS BRIDLED AT FRENCH STATEMENT THAT CSCE SUMMIT MUST BE JUSTIFIED BY SUBSTANTIAL RESULTS, STUCK HARD TO POSITION ON FRONTIER INVIOABILITY, ACCUSED WEST OF UNACCEPTABLE DESIRE TO IMPOSE VIEWS ON GENEVA. CONFIDENTIAL

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GROMYKO WAS NEGATIVE ON FRG IDEA THAT THE SECOND PHASE WIND UP AT FOREIGN MINISTER LEVEL; HE NOTED IT HAD TAKEN FOREIGN MINISTERS FOUR HOURS AT HELSINKI JUST TO AGREE THAT TALKS HAD BEEN CONSTRUCTIVE. GROMYKO URGED RAPID COMPLETION OF SECOND PHASE AT PRESENT LEVEL TO BE FOLLOWED BY SIGNATURE OF FINAL DOCUMENT AT SUMMIT. FRENCH CONCLUSION FROM ALL THIS IS THAT SOVIETS ARE MORE RIGID THAN EVER; THEY WANT A SUMMIT BUT ARE NOT PREPARED TO MAKE CONCESSIONS TO GET IT.

5. MIDDLE EAST. JOBERT AND GROMYKO TOOK HARD LINE ON OVER-ALL SETTLEMENT. HE SPOKE FORCEFULLY AGAINST EVEN MINOR FRONTIER RECTIFICATIONS IN AREA, SAYING THEY WOULD BE A PRIZE FOR AGGRESSION WITH A WORLDWIDE EFFECT. GROMYKO DESCRIBED SOVIET OBJECTIVES IN HIS COMMUNIQUE IN SYRIA AS BEING TO SET OUT SOVIET VIEW ON SETTLEMENT, ON PALESTINIANS, AND ON NECESSITY OF SOVIET PARTICIPATION IN ALL PHASES OF FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS. ON PALESTINIANS GROMYKO SAID ARABS THEMSELVES HAVE NOT DECIDED WHAT THEY THINK AND EVEN PALESTINIANS ARE IN NO GREAT HURRY. GROMYKO SAID THAT, IN HIS TWO TALKS WITH ARAFAT, PLO LEADER HAD NOT TALKED OF FUTURE PALESTINIAN STATE. GROMYKO DID NOT RAISE WITH FRENCH POSSIBILITY OF A PALESTINIAN GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE.

THE FRENCH THOUGHT GROMYKO APPEARED TO BE TRYING TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT SOVIET VIEWS ARE NOT TOO CONCRETE ON THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION BUT THAT SOMETHING WAS IN THE AIR ABOUT A FUTURE PALESTINIAN STATE (WHICH COULD INCLUDE GAZA AND WEST BANK). FRENCH ALSO FEEL THE SOVIETS ARE PUZZLED BY THE "MOBILITY" OF ARAB POSITIONS.

6. ENERGY. GROMYKO ASKED ABOUT COOPERATION BETWEEN ARABS AND EC. JOBERT SAID FUTURE CONFERENCE WOULD NOT CONCERN ITSELF WITH CURRENT POLITICAL QUESTIONS OR WITH SHORT-TERM OIL OR ENERGY PROBLEMS. ITS OBJECT WOULD BE ARAB-EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN LONG-TERM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. JOBERT SAID THERE WOULD PROBABLY BE NO CONFERENCE UNTIL LATE THIS YEAR OR EARLY NEXT YEAR. GROMYKO ASKED TO BE KEPT INFORMED OF DEVELOPMENTS.

7. UNITED STATES. THERE WAS BOTH DIRECT AND INDIRECT DISCUSSION OF THE U.S. AT ONE POINT BREZHNEV MADE A BRIEF REFERENCE TO CONCERN ABOUT VICE-PRESIDENT'S AND DEFSEC'S CONFIDENTIAL

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REMARKS ABOUT DEFENSE. BREZHNEV SAID THE U.S. WAS MAKING IT SOUND AS IF WORLD PEACE DEPENDED ON U.S. DEFENSE EFFORTS. BREZHNEV CONTINUED THAT HE HAD MADE KNOWN TO THE U.S. HIS VIEWS ON THIS (APPARENTLY A REFERENCE TO HIS TALK WITH ME) AND THAT HE WOULD TAKE MATTER UP WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER. HE ADDED THAT NOBODY CAN CONTEST SOVIET RIGHT TO DEFEND THEMSELVES. IN OTHER PARTS OF THE SUMMIT PLENARY, POMPIDOU MADE A PASSING REFERENCE TO SALT, SAYING IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR PEACE; AND JOBERT TWITTED SOVIETS ABOUT CONDOMINIUM, PROVOKING A DENIAL FROM BREZHNEV. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION FROM BREZHNEV AS TO WHETHER THE ATLANTIC CHARTER MEANT A "REDECORATION" OF NATO OR A REINFORCEMENT OF NATO'S MILITARY STRENGTH, JOBERT TOLD GROMYKO THE NEXT DAY THAT, AS HE UNDERSTOOD IT, KISSINGER'S IDEA WAS SIMPLY A "REDECORATION" OF ALLIANCE, TO MODERNIZE IT AFTER 25 YEARS.

8. OTHER SUBJECTS. ACCORDING TO VIMONT, FOLLOWING SUBJECTS WERE NOT DISCUSSED AT PLENARY SESSION (NOR, TO HIS KNOWLEDGE, AT TETE-A-TETE): CHINA, FAR EAST IN GENERAL, FRG, BERLIN, DEVELOPMENT OF EC9, AND RELATIONS BETWEEN EC AND CEMA. FRENCH RAISED MBFR BRIEFLY TO EXPLAIN REASONS FOR NON-PARTICIPATION. JOBERT TOLD GROMYKO FRENCH NEVERTHELESS WOULD WELCOME REDUCTIONS IN FORCE LEVELS IN EUROPE, "ESPECIALLY OF SOVIET TROOPS." GROMYKO DID NOT REACT TO LATTER POINT, BUT SAID ONLY THAT FRENCH WOULD BE PEASED WITH RESULTS OF FORCE REDUCTION TALKS.

9. BILATERALS. THERE WAS MUCH GENERAL TALK IN PLENARY, WITH BREZHNEV NOTING RECENT IMPROVEMENT IN SOVIET-FRENCH RELATIONS AFTER HISTORY OF UPS AND DOWNS AND POMPIDOU POINTING OUT THAT FRENCH HAD MADE FIRST OPENING TOWARD DETENTE -- FIRST IT WAS A CHEMIN, NOW IT IS AN AUTOROUTE. POMPIDOU STRESSED NECESSITY OF CONTINUOUS POLITICAL CONSULTATIONS; BREZHNEV DEFENDED OVERALL SOVIET PERFORMANCE, CLAIMED THAT ON ME THINGS HAD MOVED TOO FAST FOR MUCH CONSULTATION, AND ASSERTED THAT SOVIET UNION ALWAYS HAD DESIRE TO CONSULT WITH FRANCE FULLY AND STILL DOES. (VIMONT NOTED THAT WORKING LEVEL CONTACTS HAVE INDEED IMPROVED IN RECENT WEEKS; MJA HERE GAVE VIMONT A NOTE ABOUT GROMYKO'S VISIT TO ITALY LAST MONTH, AND FRENCH RECIPROCATED WITH NOTE ON JOBERT'S VISIT TO ME.) SOVIETS SPOKE ABOUT NEED TO RENEW EXPIRING COMMERCIAL CONFIDENTIAL

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AGREEMENT; FRENCH COUNTERED THAT THIS WAS MATTER FOR EC COMMISSION TO DECIDE. BREZHNEV ALSO EXPRESSED DESIRE FOR CULTURAL AGREEMENT; POMPIDOU SAID MATTER WAS UNDER STUDY (VIMONT SAID FRENCH HAVE LITTLE INTEREST IN THIS).

10. BRIEF COMMUNIQUE WAS A SOVIET IDEA. FRENCH HAD NOT WANTED IT BUT WENT ALONG. STOESEL

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